

General Wildlife Laws

For complete laws and rules, see Idaho Administrative Procedures Act: <http://adminrules.idaho.gov/rules/current/13/index.html>

All hunters must have a valid Idaho hunting license and the appropriate tags in their possession while hunting.

Hunting Hours: Big game animals may be hunted only from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

Definition of Hunting: Hunting means chasing, driving, flushing, attracting, pursuing, worrying, following or on the trail of, shooting at, stalking, or lying in wait for any wildlife whether or not such wildlife is then subsequently captured, killed, taken or wounded.

Age Limit: Only properly licensed youths 12 or older may hunt big game. A youth may buy a license when 11 to apply for a controlled hunt, but he or she must be 12 at the time of the hunt. A youth small game license for hunters aged 10 and 11, is not valid for big game.

Bag and Possession Limits: A hunter may harvest only as many of a big game animal species as he or she has legal tags for in that year. Any animal harvested in a depredation hunt before a controlled hunt in the same unit for which the hunter holds a tag must be included under the limit and tagging rules of the controlled hunt tag. No person may take more than one animal per year during a controlled hunt season by using both a controlled hunt tag and a depredation permit.

Gifts of Wildlife: No person may possess more game animals, birds or fish taken within the state than allowed by personal possession limits.

Mandatory Harvest Reporting Requirements: Moose, Bighorn Sheep and Mountain Goat Hunters: Hunters must present moose antlers or mountain goat horns at Idaho Fish and Game regional offices, official check point or to a conservation officer within 10 days of the kill. Bighorn sheep horns must be presented to an Idaho Fish and Game regional office where horns will be permanently marked with a metal pin.

Waste of Game: Hunters are required to remove and care for the edible meat of big game animals, except black bears, mountain lions, and gray wolves. This includes the meat from hind quarters as far down as the hock, meat of the front quarters as far down as the knee and meat along the backbone which is the loin and tenderloin. It does not include meat of the head or neck, meat covering or between the ribs, internal organs, or meat on the bones after close trimming.

Wounding and Retrieving: No person shall wound or kill any big game animal without making a reasonable effort to retrieve it and reduce it to possession. It is unlawful to enter private property that is posted, cultivated or in irrigated pasture without landowner permission to retrieve game.

Electronic Calls: No electronic calls may be used to attract big game for the purpose of harvest, except such calls may be used to attract mountain lions, black bears and gray wolves in seasons where approved by Commission proclamation.

It is Unlawful To:

- Hunt or take any wildlife without a valid hunting license or without required tag in possession.
- Party hunt, or help fill another person's tag.
- Shoot from or across the traveled portion, shoulders, or embankments of any road maintained by any government entity.
- Hunt big game or game birds from or by the use of any motorized vehicle, except for holders of a valid handicapped person's Motor

Vehicle Hunting Permit when vehicle is stopped and off public roadways.

- Use any motorized vehicle to molest, stir up, rally or drive any game animal or game bird.
- Operate or use as an aid to hunting a motor vehicle in violation of area, trail, or road restrictions.
- Use aircraft to locate game or furbearing animals and communicate location to persons on the ground, or to use any helicopter to transport hunters, gear or game, except at established landing fields.
- Fail to stop – with or without fish or wildlife – at any Fish and Game check station encountered, even if your hunting, fishing or trapping activity occurred outside the state of Idaho.
- Fail to produce wildlife for inspection upon request of a conservation officer or other person authorized to enforce Idaho Fish and Game rules.
- Hunt any wildlife species with the aid of artificial light, except raccoons. See furbearer rules in Upland Game Seasons brochure for specific regulations and other exceptions.
- Hunt Big Game with dogs, except for black bear and mountain lion. See Big Game rules for details. The use of one blood-trailing dog controlled by leash during lawful hunting hours and within 72 hours of hitting a big game animal is allowed to track wounded animals and aid in recovery. A hound hunter permit is not required.
- Transfer any license, tag, or permit or use another's license, tag, or permit.
- Acquire more controlled hunt tags per species than the bag limit for that species.
- Destroy or disturb traps, or remove any wildlife from traps belonging to others.
- Enter Idaho with livestock without a health certificate for transport and a brand inspection slip.
- Intentionally interfere with the lawful taking of wildlife or lawful predator control by another.
- Hunt any game animal by means of baiting, with the exception of applicable rules for the black bear baiting permit. See Big Game rules.

Areas Closed to Big Game Hunting:

- All state parks, except Farragut State Park and Farragut Wildlife Management Area which has a November 1 through December 1 deer archery season, and Billingsley Creek Unit of Thousand Springs State Park, Castle Rock State Park, and the City of Rocks National Reserve are open to all hunting.
- Part of the Craters of the Moon National Monument is closed to hunting. For information visit: www.nps.gov/crmo/planyourvisit/upload/CRMO-Hunting.pdf
- Nez Perce National Historical Park in Clearwater, Idaho, and Nez Perce counties.
- Harriman State Park Wildlife Refuge.

- That portion of Ada County within Veterans Memorial Park and the area between State Highway 21, Warm Springs Avenue, and the Boise City limits.
- Yellowstone National Park in Fremont County.
- Any of those portions of state wildlife preserves (Myrtle Creek, David Thompson, and Lewiston), state wildlife management areas, Springfield state bird preserve, bird refuges, and bird sanctuaries that have been closed to hunting by legislative or commission action.
- All or portions of national wildlife refuges, except as specified in federal regulations for individual refuges.
- All Snake River islands between Glenns Ferry bridge and Sailor Creek bridge in Elmore County.
- Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument in Twin Falls County, **except** that portion within an area 50 feet above the high water level of the Snake River. The upslope area is marked by yellow fiberglass markers, and hunting is permitted downslope to the river.
- Mountain lions and gray wolves may not be hunted or pursued within one-half mile of any active Idaho Fish and Game big game feeding site.
- Black bears may not be hunted or pursued within 200 yards of the perimeter of any designated dump ground or landfill.

Trespass Law: It is illegal for anyone to post public land that is not held under an exclusive control lease. Conviction of trespass on posted private property carries a mandatory one-year revocation of hunting/fishing/trapping licenses. Federal law prohibits unauthorized trespass on Indian-owned reservation lands for hunting, fishing, or trapping purposes.

No person may enter land to hunt, fish, or trap without permission if the land is either cultivated or posted with legible “No Trespassing” signs every 660 feet. As an alternative to signs, property is legally posted when using a minimum of 100 square inches of fluorescent orange paint, except when metal fence posts are used, the entire post must be painted fluorescent orange. If the geography of the property is such that entry can reasonably be made only at certain points of access, such property is posted sufficiently if signs or markings are clearly visible at access points.

Bag and Possession Limits:

- **Moose:** No person may harvest more than one antlered and one antlerless moose in Idaho during their lifetime, except that Super Hunt tag winners and left-over tag holders may harvest moose regardless of any previous harvest of moose in Idaho.
- **Bighorn Sheep:** No person may harvest more than one Rocky Mountain and one California bighorn sheep in Idaho during their lifetime. Lottery and Auction Tag winners are exempt from the once-in-a-lifetime provision.
- **Mountain Goat:** No person who has harvested a mountain goat in Idaho since 1977 may apply for a mountain goat tag in Idaho.

Closed Seasons: There are **no open seasons** for caribou, bison (buffalo), grizzly bear or lynx. With the exception of bison, these are threatened or endangered species and are protected by state and federal laws. Please report any suspected sightings of lynx to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Boise at 208-378-5243.

Furbearers: Bobcats, badgers and red foxes are classified as furbearers and may be hunted or trapped only during the furbearer-season. No open-season exists for lynx, wolverines or fishers. See current Upland Game, Furbearer & Turkey Seasons and Rules.

Possession and Sale of Wildlife Parts: Lawfully harvested wildlife parts – except edible meat from game animals – may be purchased, bartered or sold when accompanied by a written statement showing said wildlife was lawfully harvested. If black bear, mountain lion or gray wolf parts – excluding tanned or finished rugs or mounts – are sold or bartered, a signed written statement showing the taker’s name, address, license and tag numbers, date and the location of kill must be provided to the buyer. Buyers must submit completed transaction statements to Idaho Fish and Game within 10 days of sale.

Wildlife parts legally harvested outside of Idaho may be possessed and sold in Idaho if such sale is not prohibited in Idaho or the state, province or country where harvested, or by federal law.

It is unlawful to possess any wildlife or parts that were killed, taken or obtained unlawfully.

Possession and Sale of Wildlife Found Dead: Protected species of wildlife that have died of natural or accidental causes are generally considered property of the state and may not be possessed. But parts of big game species – hides, horns, antlers, elk teeth, bear, lion and wolf parts – may be recovered and possessed for personal use if the animal died of natural causes. Lawfully recovered and possessed parts – except horns from bighorn sheep – may be sold, transferred, purchased or bartered, when accompanied by a statement on how it was obtained. Edible meat from game animals taken from the wild may not be purchased, bartered or sold.

Recovery, Possession and Sale of Bighorn Sheep Horns: Horns from bighorn sheep that have died of natural causes may be recovered and possessed. All bighorn sheep horns must be presented to Fish and Game for marking with a permanent pin within 30 days of recovery. It is unlawful to sell, barter or purchase bighorn sheep horns obtained under these circumstances, or to transfer ownership of recovered bighorn sheep horns without a permit from Idaho Fish and Game.

Predatory Wildlife: Coyotes, skunks, weasels, jackrabbits, raccoons and starlings are classified by Idaho law as predatory wildlife. They may be taken in any number year-round and at any time by holders of the appropriate valid Idaho hunting or trapping licenses, provided such taking is not in violation of state, county or city laws, ordinances, rules or regulations. A permit (available from regional IDFG offices) is required during hours of darkness.

Protected Nongame and Threatened or Endangered Species: No person shall take or possess wildlife species classified as Protected Nongame or Threatened or Endangered at any time or in any manner, except as provided in Sections 36-106(e)5 and 36-1107, Idaho Code, by Commission Regulation, or IDAPA 13.01.10.100.06b.

Livestock Health Certificate Requirement: Anyone bringing livestock or hunting dogs into the state should call the Idaho Department of Agriculture, 208-332-8540, for health certificate requirements.

Weed-Free Hay Requirement: On national forest lands or Idaho Fish and Game wildlife management areas, anyone using pack animals or straw in their camp must only use weed-free certified hay, forage or straw to prevent the spread of noxious weeds. To obtain an up-to-date list of local growers and vendors with noxious weed-free certified forage for sale, call the Department of Agriculture at 208-332-8592, or check: <http://www.idahoag.us/Categories/PlantsInsects/NoxiousWeeds/nwffs.php>. For more information on the Noxious Weed-Free Forage certification program visit: <http://idahoag.us/Categories/PlantsInsects/NoxiousWeeds/indexnoxweedmain.php>.

Tagging and Transporting Game

Proper Tagging and Transportation of Animals and Meat

Immediately after any moose, bighorn sheep or mountain goat has been killed, the hunter harvesting the animal must comply with the following regulations regarding the proper tagging, transportation and shipment of a carcass:

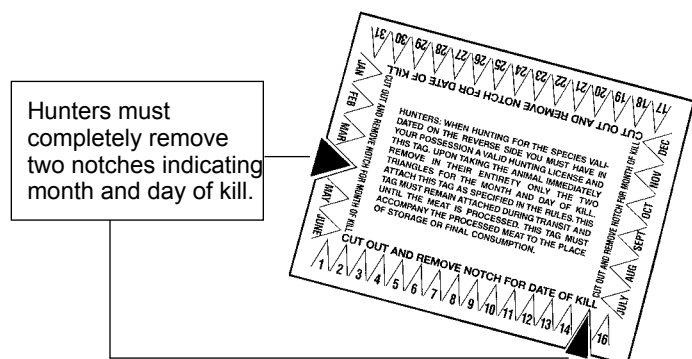
- The appropriate big game tag must be validated and securely attached to the animal **immediately after the kill**. The validated tag must remain attached to the carcass until the meat is processed and reaches the final place of storage for personal consumption.

Proper Location of Tag

- Attach to the largest portion of the carcass.

Any license, tag or permit that is defaced or altered is invalid from the date and time of issue. It is unlawful to use or attempt to use any license that has been defaced or altered.

How to properly validate a big game tag.



Note: Immediately after the kill, the triangles denoting the month and day must be cleanly and completely removed. Tearing, slicing or punching the tag is not legal.

Transportation Issues

Any person who transports any wildlife for another person or receives any wildlife for cleaning, processing, as a gift, or for storage must have a written proxy statement signed by the person who killed the animal specifying the numbers and kinds of wildlife; date taken; hunter's name and address; and license, tag and permit numbers. The proxy form is provided below for convenience.

Preserving Evidence of Sex

Moose: The antlers of a bull moose must be carried out with the head. The entire head of an antlerless male moose (with antlers less than 6 inches long) killed during an antlerless-only season may be left naturally attached to the whole carcass or to a front quarter until the carcass reaches the final place of storage or consumption. If the head is removed, the sex organs must remain naturally attached to the carcass until it reaches the final place of storage or personal consumption. Plus, the antlers must accompany the carcass while in transit.

Bighorn Sheep: Any hunter taking a bighorn sheep ram must leave that portion of the skull plate containing the upper one half of the eye socket naturally attached to both of the horns until after the horns have been pinned by Fish and Game.

Mountain goat: Hunters must pack out the head and horns. If the head is removed from the carcass, a portion of the sex organs must remain naturally attached to the carcass until it reaches the final place of storage or consumption.

PROXY STATEMENT (To transport wildlife taken by another person)

BIG GAME	Species	Sex	Description (e.g.: antler points, wrapped, hind quarter, etc.)	Hunt Area Killed	Date Killed
Please circle Species	Moose				
	Sheep				
	Goat				
	Other				

OTHER FISH/GAME:

Species _____ How many _____

Species _____ How many _____

Species _____ How many _____

Hunter/Angler's Name _____ Signature _____

Address _____ Phone _____

License No. _____ Tag No. _____ Permit No. _____

Name of person transporting _____ Phone _____

Weapon Restrictions

Rifle and Shotgun

In any hunt, including any-weapon seasons, it is unlawful to pursue or kill big game animals:

- By any means other than approved firearms, muzzleloaders and archery methods.
- With any electronic device attached to, or incorporated on, the firearm or scope; Except scopes containing battery powered or tritium lighted reticles are allowed.
- With any firearm that, in combination with a scope, sling and/or any attachments, weighs more than 16 pounds.
- With any fully automatic firearm.
- With any shotgun using shot smaller than #00 buck.
- With any rimfire rifle, rimfire handgun, or muzzleloading handgun, except for mountain lions, or legally-trapped gray wolves.

Short Range Weapons

In big game seasons restricted to short-range weapons, it is unlawful for hunters to use any weapon other than a muzzleloader, archery equipment, crossbow, or a shotgun using slugs or shot of size #00 buck or larger, or handgun using straight-walled cartridges not originally developed for rifles.

Muzzleloader Caliber Requirements

In any hunt, including general any-weapon seasons and short-range hunts, it is unlawful to pursue or kill big game animals:

- With any muzzleloading rifle or musket that is less than .45 caliber for deer, pronghorn, mountain lion or gray wolf; or is less than .50 caliber for elk, moose, bighorn sheep, mountain goat or black bear.

Muzzleloader-Only Season

Any person hunting in a muzzleloader-only season, including controlled hunts, must have in their possession a license with a muzzleloader permit validation. During a muzzleloader-only season, it is illegal to pursue or kill a big game animal with any firearm, muzzleloading pistol, or weapon other than a muzzleloading rifle or musket. In addition, the muzzleloading rifle or musket must be:

- Capable of being loaded only from the muzzle.
- Equipped with only open or peep sights. Scopes and any electronics are prohibited. Except hunters with a visual disability may apply for a permit to use nonmagnifying scopes. (Applications are available at Fish and Game offices.)
- Loaded only with loose black powder, loose Pyrodex, or other loose synthetic black powder. Pelletized powders are prohibited.
- Equipped with a single or double-barrel.
- Loaded with a projectile that is within .010 inch of the bore diameter. Sabots are prohibited.
- Loaded with a patched round ball or conical non-jacketed projectile comprised wholly of lead or lead alloy.

- Equipped only with a flint, percussion cap or musket cap. 209 primers are prohibited.
- Equipped with an ignition system, in which any portion of the cap is exposed or visible when the weapon is cocked and ready to fire.

Archery Equipment

In any hunt, including general any-weapon seasons and short-range hunts, it is unlawful to pursue or kill big game animals:

- With arrows or bolts having broadheads measuring less than 7/8 inch in width and having a primary cutting edge less than 0.015 inch thick.
- With any bow having a peak draw weight of less than 40 pounds up to or at a draw of 28 inches, or any crossbow having a peak draw weight of less than one hundred-fifty (150) pounds.
- With an arrow or bolt wherein the broadhead does not precede shaft and nock.
- With any chemicals or explosives attached to the arrow or bolt.
- With arrows or bolts having expanding broadheads.
- With arrows or bolts having barbed broadheads, which is a broadhead with any portion of which forms an angle less than 90 degrees with the shaft or ferrule.
- With any electronic or tritium-powered device attached to an arrow, bolt or bow. Except disabled archery permit holders may use a nonmagnifying sight with battery powered or tritium lighted reticles. With any bow capable of shooting more than one arrow at a time.
- With any compound bow set at more than 85 percent let-off.
- With an arrow or bolt, and broadhead with a combined total weight of less than 300 grains.
- With an arrow less than 24 inches from broadhead to nock inclusive.
- With a bolt (crossbow) less than 12 inches from broadhead to nock inclusive.

Archery-Only Season

Any person hunting in an archery-only season, including controlled hunts, must have in their possession their license with archery permit validation. During an archery-only season, it is illegal for hunters to use any firearm, crossbow, or implement other than a longbow, compound bow or recurve bow in compliance with general archery equipment requirements, or:

- Any bow equipped with magnifying sights.
- Any device that holds a bow at partial or full draw, except hunters possessing a disabled archery permit may use a device that holds a bow at partial or full draw. (Applications for the use of devices holding a bow at partial or full draw by disabled hunters are available at Fish and Game offices.)
- Any crossbow. Except disabled hunters possessing a permit may use a crossbow. (Applications for the use of crossbows by disabled hunters are available at Fish and Game offices.)

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Put your skills,
talent, and passion
to work at
Fish and Game



Enjoy a rewarding
experience
that helps the
environment,
community, and
wildlife.

Contact your
regional office to
find out how you
can get involved!

